



## Cuyahoga County Department of Development

### STOREFRONT RENOVATION REBATE PROGRAM *Guidelines and Requirements*

**The Storefront Renovation Rebate Program** (SRRP) assists property owners and/or business tenants within communities that are Urban County members. The goal of the SRRP is to help facilitate façade improvements and/or correct exterior code violations. These improvements lead to revitalized neighborhood commercial areas, elimination of blight and enhance the livability of surrounding neighborhoods.

#### **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS**

The Department of Development (DoD) realizes the value of actively working with community leaders, property owners, and business tenants to reinvigorate our Urban County communities. Therefore, the SRRP offers property owners and/or business tenants a rebate for eligible costs associated with rehabilitating their existing storefronts. The maximum total project amount is not to exceed **\$38,000**.

- Businesses located in an Improvement Target Area may receive up to a **50% rebate (maximum \$19,000)**.
- Businesses **NOT** located in an Improvement Target Area may receive **up to a 30% rebate (maximum \$11,400)**.
- Funds are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Contact the DoD **before** submitting an application.

#### **APPLICATION**

An application must be obtained from the Economic Development Director (or designee) in the municipality in which the business is located. Applications will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis depending on the availability of funds and the eligibility of the project. The local Community's Economic Development Director (or designee) will work with the applicant to meet municipal and program conditions that are required for a commitment of rebate funds. Once completed, the Economic Development Director (or designee) will submit the application to the DoD for processing.

**Please note** - The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary municipal approvals including, but not limited to the following: municipal ordinances pertaining to sign and design standards, building codes and building permits. Approval of all municipal requirements is the responsibility of the Economic Development Director (or designee) prior to application submission to the DoD. The DoD then determines eligibility of the proposed rebate project and ensures all conditions are met prior to application submission to, and approval by the County Contracts and Purchasing Board (CCPB). After the CCPB approves the rebate project, the DoD will email the Economic Development Director (or designee) and Applicant, an official Proceed Order. If the project does not receive approval, the DoD will email the Economic Development Director (or designee) and Applicant, a Notice of Explanation.

#### **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

- Building **MUST** be located in one of the 51 Urban County communities.
- Business **MUST** be registered with the Ohio Secretary of State, provide a commercial service a/o sell a retail product.
- Business **MUST** provide sales and services to the general public.
- An individual business tenant may be free standing or located in a strip mall/shopping plaza but **CAN NOT** be a franchise.
- Business tenant **MUST** have written approval from the property owner for all improvements, be financially current on their rent and have a valid occupancy permit.
- Façade improvements across the entire building for strip malls/shopping plazas must be **LESS THAN** 10,000 square feet.
- Building **MUST** have the basic American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance standards as required by state law or the planned SRRP improvements will correct ADA violations.
- Building **MUST NOT** have any active municipal code violations or the planned SRRP improvements must correct the municipal code violations.
- Property owner **MUST** be financially current on all county property taxes prior to submission of the application.
- Property owner and/or tenant (when applicable) **MUST** be registered and in compliance with the Cuyahoga County Inspector General's Ethics Ordinance requirements.
- Rehabilitation of building façade must be visible from the street facing the building.

### **Eligible Projects Include**

- ✓ Signage
- ✓ Awnings
- ✓ Windows/ Doors
- ✓ Entryways
- ✓ Exterior Painting and/or Cleaning of Siding
- ✓ Exterior Lighting
- ✓ ADA-Compliant Access
- ✓ Visible Exterior Code Violations

### **Ineligible Projects Include**

- x Roofs
- x Interior Improvements
- x Improvements to the back of building, or building foundation
- x Security systems
- x Purchase of furnishings, equipment, or other personal property which does not become part of the real estate

**Please Note:** The following projects are allowed ***only*** if they are in **addition** to **eligible** work that directly affects the facade:

- Landscaping (must be visible from the street)
- Fencing (must be visible from the street)
- Seal coating and re-stripping of parking lots and driveways (must be visible from the street)
- Minor parking lot repairs of asphalt/concrete not to exceed **50%** of total project cost
- Patio, deck or porch must be in front of the building, visible from the street and cannot exceed **50%** of total project cost

### **EXCLUSIONS**

- **Franchise Business:** an entity belonging to a larger corporate body that an individual can purchase and operate to their own standards and specifications. The individual is required by contractual arrangement to maintain standardized décor, architecture, signs or similar features. **Examples:** Franchise restaurants, gas stations, stores and auto dealerships.
- **Chain Business:** an entity that cannot be purchased by an individual, but can be managed by an individual under the authority of a corporation. **Examples:** banks, hotels, grocery and department stores.
- Vacant buildings
- New construction
- Religious institutions
- Residential properties
- Properties owned or occupied by a public agency
- Educational institutions (public, private or charter)
- Developers or leasing agents
- Commercial/ industrial businesses, warehouses, manufacturers

### **GENERAL CONDITIONS**

- **ANY** improvements, made ***prior*** to the submission and approval of an SRRP application, are **ineligible**.
- **Unless stipulated prior to approval**, all projects **MUST** be completed within one hundred eighty **(180)** days of approval by the CCPB.
- A new business **MUST** submit a copy of a lease agreement or proof of ownership of the property.
- Material only rebates are eligible for applicants who choose to provide their own sweat equity and complete the project themselves. A description of the work and two or more material bids are required.
- Developer fees are an **ineligible** project cost.
- Property owners of a strip mall or shopping plaza **LESS THAN** 10,000 square feet shall receive only one rebate; a freestanding building or business shall receive only one rebate.
- Once the SRRP application is submitted, processed, and then approved by the CCPB, the rebate amount listed in the contract cannot be increased. ***NO contract amendments are permitted.***
- The DoD will only rebate applicants after the project is complete and all vendors have been **PAID IN FULL**.
- Only property owners or business tenants may apply, and if approved, receive an SRRP rebate for the *same* property, **every other program year.**
- All applicants are subject to all applicable County ordinances, including, but not limited to, the County Ethics Ordinance, County Inspector General Ordinance, County Board of Control, County Contracts and Purchasing Ordinance. All applicants shall comply with all such ordinances as an integral part of all County contracts. Copies of all County ordinances are available on the County Council's web site at <http://council.cuyahogacounty.us>.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

**ALL applicants must contact the Economic Development Director (or designee) in your project's municipality. Applications and final reports will be submitted to your municipality's Economic Development Director (or designee). Original SRRP applications and final reports will only be accepted by the DoD from the municipality's Economic Development Director (or designee).**

1. A complete application must include the following:
  - a. Secretary of State – business name identification form. Go to the following web site: [www.sos.state.oh.us](http://www.sos.state.oh.us) businesses, business services, business name search.
  - b. Completed W-9 form for the business (must be the **same business name** listed from the above Secretary of State).
  - c. Applicant to submit a copy of the completed Cuyahoga County Contractor Registration Form (Ethics Ordinance). Go to the following web site: <http://inspectorgeneral.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/Contractor-Registration.aspx> - Contractor Exemptions, "Exempt Contractor Registration Form and Ethics Ordinance Certification." As instructed, applicant's original completed form is to be **sent directly** to the County Inspector General.
  - d. Auditor of State – Unresolved Findings for Recovery Certified Search. Go to the following web site: <http://www.auditor.state.oh.us/resources/findings/certified/default.aspx> - Input the company name next to the organization, submit search, print the results and submit with the application.
  - e. Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer - Current status of the property taxes. Please print out the results from the following web site and submit with your application: <http://fiscallofficer.cuyahogacounty.us/AuditorApps/real-property/REPI/default.asp>.
  - f. Copy of current Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation Certificate (for applicant's business).
  - g. Copy of Commercial Certificate of Liability Insurance listing Cuyahoga County and Its' Employees (1219 Ontario Street, Cleveland, OH 44113) as additionally insured.
  - h. The Ohio Department of Public Safety form. Go to the following web site, complete and print out: [http://homelandsecurity.ohio.gov/dma/dma\\_forms.asp](http://homelandsecurity.ohio.gov/dma/dma_forms.asp) (DMA for funding and business contracts)
  - i. Two color photos of the existing façade at different angles.
  - j. Two itemized, competitive and comparable bids, from two different contractors, for work to be completed within **each** trade category.
  - k. Completed Signature Authority form (see attached blank example). For questions, please contact the DoD at 216-443-7260 and ask for the Community Development Department.
2. A completed and signed contract.
3. A municipal building official (or designee) must provide an exterior building inspection and occupancy approval report.
4. The application, with all documentation, will be reviewed by the DoD. It will then be processed and submitted to the CCPB for approval, and then sent to the County Executive or Designee, for signature.
5. After officially being approved, an email notification, with the Proceed Order included, will be sent by the DoD to the municipality's Economic Director or Designee and Applicant, and said person may then commence working on the project. If the application is denied, a Notice of Explanation will be emailed to both parties.

## **FINAL REPORT/REBATE PROCESS**

Under no circumstances will a rebate be disbursed prior to the completion and final review of the project. Prior to submittal of a Final Report to the DoD by the local municipality's Economic Director (or designee), all completed work must be reviewed and in compliance with all of the relevant municipality requirements, including but not limited to building code violation corrections and/or ordinances.

1. From the applicant, a Final Report must include the following:
    - a. Copies of paid invoices, canceled checks (both sides), or signed money orders. **NO cash receipts will be accepted.**
    - b. Itemized list of completed work and the costs.
    - c. At least two photos of the completed façade improvements from different angles.
- Note:** All final report paperwork needs to be submitted **within 60 days** upon work completion for the entire project.
2. The DoD will review and process the final report (with related documentation) for rebate approval.
  3. **Rebate checks are mailed to the applicant directly from the office of the County Fiscal Officer. Please allow approximately 4 - 6 weeks for delivery.**

[www.development.cuyahogacounty.us](http://www.development.cuyahogacounty.us)